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November 4, 2011

Public Service Commission of South Carolina

P.O. Box 11649

Columbia, S. C. 29211

Gentlemen:

Regarding the matter on docket number **2011-271-E**, I am adamantly opposed to your granting Duke Energy an astronomical rate increase of **17%**. Granting such a large increase anytime would be totally irresponsible; doing so now, November 2011, with the existing national, state and local economies in place, would be criminal.

The secret to any entity working its way out of difficult financial straits, which this country has been in since April 2009, is to freeze as far as possible all variables involved and allow the participants to master the difficulties and move out of the cocoon of problems. Granting an exorbitant increase of anything near 17% would serve to aggravate any opportunity for recovery for small businesses and individual families, such as mine. Even significant corporations such as Duke Energy must realize that now is not the time for improvements and expansions. Only last week did Duke Energy offer to S.C. residents a **1.70%** rate of return on their PremierNotes plan; this beats any other plan I know of by almost a full percentage point. Clearly, the net result is that Duke Energy is counting on your Commission to hoist them above any investment competition by granting their outrageous request.

I beseech you to deny Duke's request. For three years, retirees age 63 and above have not received a Social Security COLA increase, which is required by Federal law to follow the CPI-Urbain formula. Social Security is not an "entitlement" for me. I paid **6.2%** of my gross salary into the Fund matched by my **employer's 6.2%** for **46** years. For only a brief period did the rate drop to **4.2%**. So, Social Security is only returning to me **my** money. Social Security recipients reportedly will receive a **3.6%** increase beginning 2012...will this be destroyed by Duke's **17%** request?

I appreciate your consideration of my request.

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Sincerely
Billy J. Patterson
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